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## THE EDUCATIONAL EXHIBITION AT ST MARTIN'S HALL.

THE Great Exhibition of 1851 seems destined to be the forerunner of numerous humanising enterprises, calculated to give all classes and all nations an insight into the better part of the character and doings of their neighbours. It set our Irish brethren busily to work, to establish an exhibition such as Ireland never saw before, and such as called forth a large measure of liberality and friendliness of sentiment. It urged our transatlantic fellow Saxons to try their hands at a Crystal Palace, and at a display of industry which English manufacturers do well to treat with respectful attention. It is impelling France to the formation of a majestic international Exhibition, in which Englishmen—now brought into a surprising state of good-humour with their former enemies—will take part in an industrial tournament in 1855. It has been the parent of that unequalled structure, the Crystal Palace at Sydenham, which has a future career before it whereof it would be difficult even to guess the extent or scope. It has led to the purchase of a large estate at Kensington Gore, which, albeit that governmental proceedings are terribly slow and ineffective, may one day be the home of art, science, and industry. It has led to such increased classes, lectures, and museums, at Marlborough House and the School of Practical Science, that men of science and working-men are brought together now as they seldom were before. It has led to special exhibitions at the Society of Arts, one each year, which have illustrated certain departments of knowledge in a very agreeable way. And now it has led to the organisation of an Educational Exhibition, such as is quite novel in this country.

The Educational Exhibition, now being holden at Mr Hullah's rooms, St Martin's Hall, in Long Acre, is highly interesting, and worthy of attention; since it is connected with a kind of centenary of art and education, and brings into one focus things and appliances which have never been brought together before. The Society of Arts is just one hundred years old; a venerable centenary, that gets more vigorous as it gets older—its renewed vigour dating from the year when the Prince-Consort became president. Praise to the Prince, say we; praise, given without the smallest tendency to fawn or flatter. This, then, being the hundredth anniversary, the council bethought them how they might worthily commemorate the year 1854. They have done the eating and drinking part of the commemoration already, and we need say nought about that; but they resolved on something less evanescent than eating and drinking. In 1852, a plan was commenced

of receiving into union the literary and scientific institutions, philosophical societies, atheneums, and mechanics' institutes, established in various parts of the United Kingdom; and this with the object of assisting them, in any practicable way, in carrying out the great work of education which all of them have more or less in view. Down to the present time, more than 350 such societies and institutions have joined this union; and it would belie all past experience, if some good should not spring out of such co-operation. At a conference of representatives of these institutions, held in June 1853, it was resolved to invite the Council of the Society of Arts to establish an Educational Exhibition in 1854, as a worthy commemoration of the centenary. The council took up the matter in a right spirit; they applied to the foreign and colonial departments of the government, who assisted them in making the object known in foreign and colonial countries. In order to facilitate and encourage the exhibition of foreign appliances, the government permitted the admission at our ports, duty free, of all articles destined for the Educational Exhibition. At first, it was intended that the exhibition should be held at the rooms of the Society of Arts; but the number of contributors and contributed articles became so great, that St Martin's Hall was selected as the locality.

Such have been the 'antecedents' of the Educational Exhibition; and when we look at the bulky shilling-catalogue, it becomes evident that the number of exhibited articles must be very large. A visit to the place itself confirms this idea; for the great hall, and its galleries, staircases, passages, and approaches, are packed as closely as they can well be—irrespective of a long suite of rooms, somewhere up aloft near the sky, where the booksellers and mapsellers have matters all their own way. The articles are exhibited partly on walls, partly on counters and tables, and partly in cases; and as most of them are numbered with figures corresponding to those in the catalogue, their identification is tolerably easy.

Perhaps we shall best impart to our readers a general notion of this exhibition, if we say a few words first concerning the exhibitors, and then concerning the articles exhibited.

In the first place, then, the principal exhibitors are the societies and institutions which are engaged in fostering the great work of education. These are surprisingly numerous—comprising the National Society, the British and Foreign School Society, the Home and Colonial School Society, the Congregational Board of Education, the Wesleyan Education Committee, the Religious Tract Society, the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, the Irish Education Commis-

sioners, the Schoolmasters' Association, the Liverpool Collegiate Institution, the Government Department of Science and Arts, the Government Inspectors of Schools, the Royal Naval Schools at Greenwich, the Cheltenham Normal College, the Committee of Council on Education, the Norwich Training Institution, and numerous schools—Training, Infant, Parochial, Ragged, Proprietary, National, Industrial, Roman Catholic, and Jewish—in various parts of the country. Next come those excellent institutions which work earnestly to educate the poor unfortunates who have one or other of the inlets of knowledge closed: the Blind Schools in London (three in number) and in Yorkshire; the Deaf and Dumb Schools at Doncaster, Exeter, and Liverpool; and the Asylum for Idiots—all exhibit. Then come persons who have written books on education; persons who have invented apparatus useful in school-rooms; persons who manufacture and sell all the material appliances for education. Next come the publishers—the Longmans, the Whittakers, the Vartys, the Simpkins, the Parkers, the Dartons, the Maberleys, the Bagsters, the Blacks, the Blackies, the Blackwoods, the Chamberseys, and others—all of whom become exhibitors, not in respect to their general publications, but in respect to such as bear directly upon the subject of education. Lastly—for we need not aim at any great minuteness—there are exhibitors whose display is of very great interest—comprising those from the United States, the British American colonies, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Holland, Malta, Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland. Some of these foreign exhibitors are private individuals; but many of them are societies and government departments—such as the New York Board of Education, the Church Schools at Halifax, the Abendberg Asylum for Crétins, the Norwegian Governmental Department for Education, the Educational Council of Norway, the Council of Education at Thurgovie, and others. The number of articles exhibited, it is quite impossible to name with any pretension to accuracy; for, generally speaking, each number in the catalogue refers to the entire contributions from some one exhibitor.

One of the first facts which attracts the attention in this exhibition, is the great diversity of articles now supplied by the chief educational societies. Without touching upon any of the controversies between Churchmen and Dissenters, it is well known that these societies have approached by slow steps their present position. At a period not very far distant, many well-meaning persons—persons who had both the means and the wish to advance the position of the humbler classes—had quite a dread of anything beyond the merest rudiments of education for the children of working-men. The Bible, and a little reading, writing, and ciphering, were considered to be all that could safely be introduced into the machinery of popular education. But first one society, and then a second society, slightly extended their range; and then others did so likewise, that they might not be left behind in the race. Then, knowing that teachers and school-mistresses must have higher acquirements, if they are to impart a higher education, and knowing that the then existing masters and teachers had had to pick up their own education in a piecemeal and imperfect manner, the societies saw the necessity of establishing Normal Schools, to teach those who are in their turn to become teachers. And then, as there ought to be some means of judging of the relative fitness of the teachers, it was felt that a college of preceptors might be useful, to award certificates that would, to a greater or less extent, afford a guarantee for the qualifications of teachers. And lastly, the very machinery whereby

pupil-teachers are taught, supplies easy means for improving the school machinery for the humble everyday scholars. It is by some such steps as these that the National Society, the British and Foreign School Society, the Home and Colonial School Society, the Congregational Board of Education, the Irish Commissioners of Education, and similar bodies, have sanctioned and accumulated a stock of school machinery which has become quite formidable.

It matters little which we take as an exemplar of the societies generally; but let it be the National Society, whose schools are so well known all over England. Of the Society's school materials and books, there is a specimen of everything, we believe, at the Educational Exhibition; at any rate, the exceptions are but few. First, we find 'Copy and Elementary Writing-books,' foolscap and post, ruled and plain, common and superfine, 12-leaved and 18-leaved, outline and graduated, which the Society supplies to schools at prices varying from 9d. to 4s. per dozen. Then come ruled books for manuscript music, of various sizes and shapes; then ciphering and memorandum books, still more varied in size and price. A full classification of papers—writing, blotting, letter, and note—is provided; together with all such writing-desk appliances as envelopes, sealing-wax, wafers, quill and steel pens, pen-holders, India-rubber, ink-bottles, ink-stands, &c. Slates and slate-pencils form a more interesting series than would generally be supposed; for besides the ordinary framed slates for writing, there are slates ruled with lines, slates with outline-maps scratched or engraved upon them, slates ruled for music, slates with engraved alphabets, large slates for diagrams, and slate-globes with a few geographical elements outlined upon them. Then there are globes, in box or on stand or pedestal, varying from 2s. to eight guineas each; school-clocks, silent or striking; black-boards for diagrams; desks, forms, and standards for them; easels and lesson-stands; abaci, or arithmetical frames; millboards, for lessons and prints; drawing and mathematical instruments, from the very cheap to the moderately dear; sponges, penknives, desk-knives, book-markers, school-bells, school-whistles, portfolios, pen-trays, half-hour glasses, blotting-pads, and a number of useful trifles, which it would be no easy matter to enumerate. For teaching special branches of education, the apparatus is in some cases very complete. There are copies for writing, prepared in very varied forms. There are copies for drawing, still more varied, comprising trees, flowers, animals, buildings, landscapes, common objects, the human figure, &c.; and to aid in the use of these, there are all the usual kinds of drawing materials, such as drawing-paper, sketch-books, Bristol-board, pencils and crayons, crayon-holders, drawing-boards, boxes of colours, squares, and parallel rulers; and so forth. There are chemical laboratories in portable cases; cabinets of shells, minerals, crystals, and common objects; folding drawing-models; solid models, susceptible of separation and re-adjustment, for illustrating geometry and many departments of science and art; diagrams of large size, illustrative of the mechanical powers, astronomical phenomena, natural philosophy, geological strata, and manufacturing processes; sheet-lessons of large size and of varied character. There are the numerous cards and tickets now used in the practical conduct of schools—such as admission-cards, suspension-tickets, confirmation-cards, admonition-tickets, reward-tickets, late-tickets, punishment-tickets, 'clean-and-tidy' tickets, and many others well known to persons familiar with the working of popular schools. The little girls are not unprovided for, since their needle-work studies are aided by due supplies of needles, pins, sewing-cotton, thimbles, and scissors. In relation to prints, maps, and books, the Society's publications have become numerous: prints for infant schools and prints for more advanced schools;

maps in single sheets and maps in atlases; books for general reading and books for studying grammar, etymology, arithmetic, mechanics, mensuration, geography, history, needle-work, the principles of teaching, &c.

Now, so far as the Educational Exhibition is concerned, this display made by the National Society may be regarded as the Society's declaration of what they can do, what they propose to effect, and how they select material aids to facilitate their work. If another society be deficient in any of these aids, a careful and systematic examination will enable them to measure the extent of the deficiency, and to fill up the blanks so far as they may think proper. On the other hand, should this second society have adopted useful aids in which the former is wanting, a return benefit may result; and, as in morals and in magnetism, each may gain strength in giving. It is not, or ought not to be, a vain emulation. All the societies have, we believe, frankly and candidly put forth their real evidence—have really pictured what they are doing, and how they do it; and the juxtaposition of contributions from different quarters, renders comparison very easy. We may pass from the National Society to the British and Foreign School Society, and examine the latter's models of school-rooms, model-maps, objects for object-lessons, objects to illustrate manufactures, models of machinery, plaster casts for model-drawing, appliances for teaching writing and arithmetic, maps and globes, drawing-materials, diagrams, lesson-tablets, class-books, &c. And so of the Home and Colonial Society, the Sunday-school Union, and the rest. In so far as the government has become an educator, it employs material aids somewhat largely; and thus the Department of Science and Art has very properly sent to the Educational Exhibition specimens of nearly all the apparatus employed, comprising drawing-instruments, colour-boxes, strained canvas, copies for outline-drawing, drawings of machines, drawings of architecture—marine and engineering, diagrams and catechisms of colour, copies for shaded-drawing, copies for coloured-drawing, solid models and folding models, selected specimens of art-workmanship in pottery, plaster, and metal.

And as it is with the societies, so is it with individuals. If a schoolmaster, by his own clear sense, aided or not by a little pecuniary help, has devised something new or useful in educational apparatus, he is just the sort of person whose contributions to this Exhibition would be valued; and we consequently find numerous examples of this kind—examples of small contrivances which may be usefully adopted by others besides the contriver.

To those who are not especially connected with education in its ordinary routine, the apparatus for the blind is perhaps more interesting than the materials for general schools. The excellent society whose asylum is at Avenue Road, in the Regent's Park, for instance, have sent specimens of all the apparatus used by them in teaching the blind. Those who have studied this subject, are aware that an interesting controversy has been long carried on respecting the question—whether the raised letters for the blind ought to be in ordinary alphabetical characters, or in some kind of arbitrary short-hand. It would be out of place here for us to offer an opinion on this matter; and we will therefore simply say, that the society just named adopt an arbitrary character, composed of straight lines, curves, and dots. In this character they have printed numerous books. They have also embossed music, embossed chess-boards, embossed geometrical-boards, and embossed maps, for the blind. Mr Wood's embossed music is highly curious. The notes are represented by short strokes; the direction of the stroke represents the pitch of each note; the position of a dot represents the time or duration of a note; and thus—the pitch and the duration of each note being both shewn by one

character—the ordinary music-stave of five lines may be dispensed with, and the music is brought into one line, like common writing. The Blind Asylum in St George's Fields adopts the ordinary Roman alphabetical character; and it is pleasant to see, at the Educational Exhibition, a copy of the world-renowned *Robinson Crusoe* embossed in this type: the letters are beautifully distinct, and are so large, that Defoe's story occupies two quarto volumes; but then, as these volumes are sold so low as half-a-crown each, they are really cheap in respect to the object in view.

No part of the Exhibition is better worthy of study, than the contributions from foreign countries. Travellers and politicians, artists and moralists, place the men and women of foreign countries before our eyes; but here we have the boys and girls, in respect to the means whereby they are taught, and the practical results of the teaching. Why it is that a region so far north and out of the world as Scandinavia, should be better represented at this Exhibition than any other country, we cannot say; but such certainly seems to be the case, and Norway and Sweden are well worth attention at this reunion of nations.

It appears that, so far as regards these two countries—both under one monarch—the contributions come from the Government Department of Education, and from several managers of public and private schools. The contributions include, among other things, drawings of Swedish and Norwegian school-houses and school-rooms; ground-plans of school-buildings; programmes of schools, in respect to divisions into classes, subjects taught, weekly arrangements of lessons, and the number of pupils in each class; models and drawings of school apparatus; reports and records of various schools; models for teaching drawing, and specimens of drawings made by the school-children; the collection of apparatus used for teaching natural philosophy; selections from a zoological collection for teaching natural history; specimens of exercises, from various schools, in writing, Norwegian and Swedish composition, mathematics, German, English, French, and Latin; collection of class-books from various schools; collection of maps published at Stockholm and Christiania; and an instrument called the psalmodicon, for teaching music. Now, all this is excellent. It takes us at once into the boyhood and girlhood of those northern countries; it shews us what Young Scandinavia is about, and how it learns, and how it is taught. A detailed examination is in many parts curious, and worth the time it takes, even if it were merely to ascertain whether school-children fill up their books in Sweden as they do in England. We find that, where an English boy practises large hand in such long words as 'Transubstantiation,' 'Incommensurability,' and so forth, a Swedish boy has likewise his long words, which will frighten an English eye, as the following may perhaps shew: Rättfärdiggörelsen, Urskilningsgräfen, Yttranderättigheten—words, the equivalents of which in English we need not trouble ourselves to ferret out. Without professing to have a taste in needle-work, we may yet like to look at specimens of 'plain work' from the 'Trondjem Realskole,' especially the shirt wristband done in the 'Pigeskolens Begynderklasse,' or the beginning-class in the girls' school. There is an ingenious writing-frame for the blind in the Swedish Department, nearly like some of those used in England: there are two parallel rulers, the distance of which, asunder, is equal to the height of the letters to be made. These rulers have a little sliding-piece, which regulates the slope of the letters: the rulers rest on grooves in a frame; a tablet is placed within the frame, paper is placed upon the tablet, and thus the pupil writes in the oblong space between the two rulers, shifting the rulers from groove to groove as each line becomes finished. There is, in the machine, a sheet of paper, which purports to have been written



by some poor little Swedish blind boy or girl; and although the copy for sentence, that 'Europa är den mest bildade verldsdel,' simply corresponds with our own home-copies respecting the superior civilised condition of Europe, it is yet interesting as coming from the pen of a Swedish *arugle*.

In the Danish Department, there are a few written specimens which seem to recognise a sound principle. They are, apparently, examples of school-penmanship: each is headed at the top with the name of some distinguished Dane, such as Oersted, Schwanthaler, or Öhlenschläger; and underneath are a few verses commemorative of the hero. If the verses have any merit—if they rise above the level of mere rhyming—there is a spirit in all this which we like. There are not wanting English worthies who might be similarly placed before the eyes of English school-boys, provided always that the verses were in some degree worthy of the worthies—a point of no small difficulty.

It is just possible that those who have no opportunity of visiting this Educational Exhibition, may obtain a slight notion of its character from this brief sketch of ours. To those who can go, and who feel any pleasure in the advancement of education, we would say: Go by all means: you will obtain more than the money's worth for the trifle of money spent.

## THE HEIR-AT-LAW.

### CHAPTER II.

MARY SELWYN rose early on the following morning, and when I joined her at breakfast, she had, in appearance at least, quite recovered her usual cheerfulness and equanimity. She had determined, instead of writing, to go personally, and insist upon Clara's immediate return home. Another consternation awaited us: a note arrived from Mr Calvert, containing, beside the ordinary compliments, &c., a brief intimation that important affairs obliged him to leave that part of the country, and that some months would probably elapse before he could promise himself the pleasure of again calling at Beach Villa. 'Very extraordinary conduct this,' I exclaimed; 'upon my word, the man is a perfect riddle!'

'True,' was the low-voiced reply; 'and one which those who have duties to perform should not waste time in endeavouring to solve. Ah! here comes the fly Susan has ordered. Good-by, Gertrude, till the evening. We shall not be late home, I hope.'

It was, however, past ten o'clock before the fly returned, bringing the two Misses and Mrs Selwyn, the last still swelling and panting with the but partially abated storm of rage which Mary's determined insistence upon her sister's return with her to Beach Villa had thrown her into. Clara who, one could see, had been profusely weeping, retired to bed at once; but Mrs Selwyn, whose excitement precluded rest, or a wish for it, remained up to vent her indignation—first upon Mary, and when she had withdrawn, upon hapless me, who could not well refuse to listen. I gathered from the irate lady's objurgations, that there had been a violent scene at the Lumsdens; that Mary Selwyn's firmness prevailed with difficulty, and not till Clara herself—upon being reminded, I had no doubt, of her father's dying injunctions, ever a potent spell with her—had decided for her prim half-sister against her own mother. It seemed, moreover, that two gentlemen had been dangling after Clara—Captain Toulmin, the young lady's favourite it was

intimated, and his friend, Mr Francis Herbert, the second son of the dowager Mrs Herbert, of Ashe Priory, the towers whereof were, on a bright clear day, dimly visible from the garret-windows of Beach Villa, whom Mrs Selwyn was evidently mad enough to hope might be hymeneally caught in the meshes of her own and her daughter's ambition. This struck me as so utterly preposterous, the Herberts ranking amongst the highest magnates of that division of the county, that I could hardly forbear laughing in the silly woman's face. Reflecting, however, that maternal vanity has ever been a chartered dreamer, I maintained, though with difficulty, a serious expression of face; and Mrs Selwyn, having at last exhausted for a time the phials of her wordy wrath, muttered a sour good-night, and went to bed.

The next day but one, Beach Villa was let upon terms which had been several times previously refused; and within twenty-four hours of the completion of the bargain, the Selwyn family were on the road to Preston, near which a habitation more suitable to their means had been taken for them by Mr Thornley. Personal intercourse with my young friends was thus necessarily terminated; and that by letter, chiefly from the swift coming on of trouble in my own home, soon became infrequent, and before I left Lancashire, had entirely ceased. My father, a lieutenant in the royal navy, who had served with Nelson, was released at last by the welcome hand of death from sufferings he had bravely borne for several years: and in about two months only my mother sickened of the malady which was soon to reunite both parents in their long home. In the presence of these griefs, all minor regrets were of course rebuked and hushed; the Selwyns and their self-created difficulties were for the time forgotten; and I nerved myself to pursue with hope and courage the strange and solitary path of life before me, and over which thick darkness had so early fallen.

It was some time before I succeeded in obtaining the engagement with Mrs Ansted; and how that terminated, together with the sudden apparition of Clara Selwyn, bewilderingly transformed into Mrs Francis Herbert, of Ashe Priory, the reader has already been informed. The only tidings of the Selwyns which reached me after leaving Lancashire, was a hurried answer to a question addressed by me to Mr Thornley, whom I met at the Euston Station, just as the train in which he had taken his seat was about to start. I had inquired after Mary Selwyn, and his reply was to the effect, that she had long since thrown herself away upon a mean adventurer of the name of Calvert, and was, he understood, living in obscurity somewhere in Wales with her husband and one or two children. He had not time to add, that his information was solely derived, as I afterwards knew, from Mrs Selwyn, or I should have more correctly estimated the probable truth of the imputation upon Mr Calvert.

After this recapitulation of bygone events, it will not, I hope, appear surprising that I was bewildered by the unexpectedly announced and marvellous change in Clara's fortune, drawing after it a minor but still very appreciable improvement in my own. And, for the life of me, I could not at all realise that change. It seemed to be an impossible, dream-like extravagance—a *coup de théâtre*, only to be met with in a play or a novel, and I was half tempted to doubt, whilst proceeding the next morning in a cab to the Clarendon, whether I should really find the Selwyns in that aristocratic hotel. So far, however, there was

no illusion; Mrs Selwyn, who was looking exceedingly well, received me with prodigious condescension, and *Redburn'd* me over again and again with untiring self-complacency. With Clara, I was still 'dear Gertrude,' as in the old time; and her son, a nice little boy of about five years of age, had, I found, been tutored to address me as his mother did.

Precisely at twelve o'clock, we set out in a travelling-carriage, with four post-horses, for Ashe Priory—Mrs Selwyn being of opinion that journeying by rail was essentially vulgar and plebeian—and in due time were safely deposited at our destination. Arrived at that splendid abode, the feeling of unreality—a sense of the precarious tenure by which the lordly pile and its adjuncts *must*, I felt, be held by the present apparent mistress, returned upon my mind with aggravated force; and if I rightly read Clara's brightly flushing face, and nervous, unquiet looks, the same thought was beating at her heart, as, encompassed in each other's arms, we, with a shrinkingness, a timidity impossible to shake off, ventured through the stately and solitary apartments. 'Clara Selwyn'—thus ran my thoughts whilst making a hurried dinner-toilet—'Clara Selwyn the indisputable mistress of all this splendour—impossible! The same law-legerdemain which has installed her here in right of her son, will, I fear, by some counter-trick dissipate the glittering dream! In right of her son! Ay, that must be the substance which casts these ominous shadows! Clara's grandeur, at the best, can be commensurate only with the life of that frail boy; and not grandeur only, but bare competence; for now, when calling to mind the fragments of conversation between Clara and Mrs Selwyn during our journey, I remembered they talked of a legal opinion having been given that Clara's husband, Francis Herbert, having died before his elder brother, when he was consequently not possessed—seised, I recollect, the term was—of the property, she therefore, as his widow, was not entitled to her thirds of the personals. They spoke, too, of a sealed packet of papers found in the elder brother Edmund Herbert's *escritoire*, directed to an intimate friend of his, a colonial bishop, and of course duly forwarded, which, it is thought, may possibly contain a will disposing of the large personals, the landed property being strictly entailed on the heirs-male; and the alarming conclusion is, that the death of her son, the child heir-at-law, would at once hurl Clara from her present brilliant position into the abyss—by contrast made more terrible—of poverty and dependence! This boding train of thought pursued me as I sat at dinner—a cumbrously comfortless one, by the by, except to Mrs Selwyn, who really seemed to feel that dining with a tall lackey posted behind her chair was her natural though shamefully delayed destiny; and I intently scanned the *physique* of the pale boy, whom his mamma insisted should dine with us, in fruitless quest of decisive indications pointing to a brief or a prolonged life.

These panic terrors had, to a great degree, subsided by noon on the morrow: the air was bright, clear, and invigorating to both mind and body: rest had restored the child's ruddy colour, and it was, after all, I reasoned in my improved mood of thought, likelier, or, at all events, quite as likely, that he would live to be the father of a family, as perish prematurely in his nonage. And the affair altogether, after a time, no longer struck me as being so monstrously absurd, so utterly incredible. The servants, old as well as young, all acquiesced, undoubtedly, in the rule of the new dynasty; the numerous cards left by the notabilities for miles around were, to my silly thinking, so many attestations of the belief of those persons in the stability of the existing state of things; and I gradually ceased to torment myself by too curiously prying, or striving to do so, into the fateful and impervious future.

Clara, notwithstanding Mrs Selwyn's vehement

dissuasion, did not delay writing to her sister Mary—Mrs Calvert—urging her, in the kindest terms, to come and take up her abode with her two sons at Ashe Priory. Mary's answer—dated from the neighbourhood of Douglas, Isle of Man, where she had chiefly resided since her marriage—was a refusal of the invitation, at all events, for the present. She did not propose leaving home till the arrival of a gentleman, then abroad, to whom the settlement of her deceased husband's affairs had been intrusted. Clara, the letter stated, had been misinformed with respect to her, Mary's, pecuniary resources, which had always sufficed, not for the necessities only, but for the elegances of life, and would do so amply in the future. One brief phrase, alluding to the writer's bereavement, was conclusive with me, spite of Mr Thornley's second-hand story, afterwards very positively re-indorsed by Mrs Selwyn, that Mr Calvert had been in every respect worthy of the strong love which dictated it. More immediately addressing Clara in the old tone of affectionate warning, Mary adjured her with almost pathetic earnestness, not, spite of the present cloudless sunshine of good-fortune, to rest her future happiness and peace upon worldly elevation and grandeur. This was repeated again and again, in varying terms, but always with a fervency which shewed they were not mere cant words of course, but grave, and, in the writer's judgment, much-needed counsels. The menacing chance, then, that Clara's son might die during legal infancy, had painfully impressed her sister's mind as well as mine!—not prophetically, I could only hope and pray.

Although Mrs Calvert declined an asylum at Ashe Priory, another lady, the Hon. Mrs Toulmin, whom her son, Captain Toulmin, had by his reckless follies, it appeared, literally beggared, gladly accepted it, when pressed upon her with much delicacy and generous feeling by Clara. A remarkable compound of pride and kindness, buckram and benevolence, was that tall, pale, dignified, and very courteous personage. She could not but feel, and that acutely too, that Captain Toulmin, the next male heir to the domains of her ancestors, as well as of the Herberts, had been barred from the succession by the madcap marriage of his cousin, Francis Herbert, with a beautiful Nobody; yet did she soon come to love warmly the child of that marriage, who alone stood between her own son and a splendid heritage; and was as proud of the charming mistress of Ashe Priory as if Clara, instead of being a mere *parvenue*, could have boasted of a pedigree as long and unexceptionable as that of the last winner of the Derby. One curious trait in the good lady's character afforded us—that is, Clara and myself—much quiet amusement. Most persons, I have heard, derive pleasure, like honest Dogberry, from being able to boast of their losses; but this, I suppose natural propensity, was, with the Hon. Mrs Toulmin, exaggerated to monomania. Over and over again, we used to watch her making elaborate and corrected estimates of the money-value of the family plate, jewels, furniture, books, horses, carriages—of every valuable, in brief, whereof she or her son—the same thing—had been despoiled by the law of succession, her self-importance evidently increasing, *pro rata*, with the vastness of the sums thus laboriously ascertained; and when, as sometimes happened, a property was spoken of in her presence—a farm, for instance—of which she had not before heard, she would eagerly inquire its gross value, note it instantly with a pencil upon her ivory tablets, adding it to the previous total, and then mentally glorify herself upon the additional wealth she was thus proved to have lost! In sooth, my own opinion is, that all the Herberts were more or less of eccentric intellect. In the dowager Mrs Herbert before spoken of, the erratic mental predisposition manifested itself in a pride of lineage—of which I could give many ludicrous anecdotes—approaching to insanity in its fantastical

extravagance; in Francis Herbert, on the contrary, it displayed itself in contemptuous disregard of the marital code governing his order; and in the Hon. Mrs Toulmin, not only as just related, but in other modes which it is needless further to allude to. Before this narrative is concluded, the reader will perhaps discover additional proof of the soundness of my theory.

The presence of the Hon. Mrs Toulmin at Ashe Priory naturally drew after it that of Captain Toulmin; and it did not fail to occur to me, that Clara might have had some notion of the kind when she pressed the invitation upon that lady. However that might have been, September was no sooner at hand, than Captain Toulmin rented a sporting-box in the neighbourhood, and thenceforth was a daily guest at the Priory. A gay, handsome, specious man of the world, of about, I should say, five-and-thirty, was Captain Toulmin; a gentleman of polished address withal, and completely master of the little arts of society, which, being constantly in requisition, are so effective in making a company reputation, and concealing essential defects of education and character. Fully determined, too, was he to render himself exceedingly agreeable to Mrs Francis Herbert, and to marry her, if her little boy's health should *not*—as it had already evinced some indecisive symptoms of doing—fatally decline. There was another frequent guest at the Priory, the Rev. Charles Atherley, rector of the parish, though only eight-and-twenty, possessor of a handsome income, and a very different man from Captain Toulmin; the fate of his timid matrimonial aspirations also depended, I could not help believing, upon that of Clara's son. 'Poor boy!' I silently soliloquised one afternoon, as, partially hidden by a sun-screen, I watched the demeanour of the two gentlemen, who had been affecting to read, as an excuse for non-intercourse, both being implacably jealous of each other—'Poor boy! you little know with what intensity of interest they are contemplating the sudden pallor that has overspread your pretty face—the languid listlessness with which you have just laid aside your play-toys, and stretched yourself upon that couch. You did not see, and seeing, would not have comprehended, the exultant flash, as lurid as fire from the bottomless pit, which broke from the dark eyes of the captain; no more than you would the rector's involuntary glance—not of grief—quickly followed by the pang of self-reproach, which has sent him hurriedly across the room to you with those oranges and jujubes, and causes him to speak with such gentle tenderness, that you look up lovingly in his face, and take his hand as if it were your mamma's or mine.' The good rector has since then often declared that my surmise wronged him; but I am not for that the less convinced that I was right. The truth was, he was over head and ears in love with Clara, and could not shut out from his mind, try as he might, an instinctive conviction, that were Mrs Herbert no longer the lady of Ashe Priory, and mother of the heir to the Herbert estates, Captain Toulmin would at once cease to be his rival; and moreover, that possibly the rectory, and something approaching to two thousand a year, might not, in that case, be thought beneath her acceptance.

All this, I say, was as plain to me, a looker-on at the play of cross and selfish purposes in progress—lookers-on proverbially knowing more of the game than the actual players—as if the Rev. Charles Atherley, A.M., and Captain Toulmin, had told me so in as many words; but Clara's inclinations I could not so positively determine. I saw that the handsome *roué* was her shadow, whether she remained at home, or walked, or rode out, and that she was flattered, pleased with his obsequious courtesies; but this was all; and she invariably, moreover, laughed off every attempt I made to treat the matter seriously. Then Mrs Selwyn was indefatigable in his praises, which I could very well

understand and excuse; forasmuch that Captain Toulmin, being the next heir to the entailed estates after little Francis, a marriage with him would insure Clara's future, and of course her own, in any eventuality. The Hon. Mrs Toulmin also greatly favoured her son's *apparent* intentions; and after much cogitation, and considerably influenced by the recollection of what I heard Mr Calvert say of Captain Toulmin, I determined upon writing to Mary, and informing her of my conjectures, doubts, and fears; not forgetting to add an injunction to keep my name out of any controversy that might arise upon the subject. My letter was quickly responded to, and in person: Mary Selwyn—Mrs Calvert, I should say—making her appearance at the Priory as soon as a letter by return of post would have reached me. Surprised, delighted, I need hardly say Clara and I were to see her; and looking so wonderfully well, too, spite of the tint of recent sorrow which shaded and softened the fine glow of health, and a certain matronly, yet youthful grace and air which seemed, so to speak, to radiate from her. I had no idea she would ever have been so handsome, and the same thought was, I saw, sparkling in her sister's eyes. Mrs Selwyn's greeting was of the coldest, grimmest; and her discontent was greatly increased the following day when Mary directly questioned her sister concerning Captain Toulmin; and upon receiving, what she deemed, unsatisfactory replies, peremptorily insisted, as if Clara was still a child, and she her absolute guardian, that the intimacy should be forthwith and unmistakably broken off. This *brusque* mode of proceeding was certainly not in accordance with the dictates of Mary's usual calm good sense. Clara, as might have been anticipated, accustomed as she had of late been to the most obsequious deference, would not tolerate such rude schooling, even from her sister; and Mrs Selwyn fired up with ungovernable fury. Mary soon recovered her rarely lost command of temper, listened for some time with unruffled composure to the dual storm she had rashly evoked, and at last said in her quietest manner, in reply to a rude taunt of Mrs Selwyn's relative to her own comparatively beggarly match with that Calvert, and rising as she spoke to leave the room—'I do not reply to you as you deserve, because my father's wife and Clara's mother will always be at least passively respected by me, even when, as now, she grossly fails in respect to herself. Come with me, Gertrude: I wish to speak with you.'

We passed out of the house, and for some time walked silently about the lawn and shrubberies, Mary, as I could feel by the trembling of her arm, for I did not like to speak or peer into her face, being very much agitated—I supposed in consequence of Mrs Selwyn's coarse and unfeeling allusion to her husband. After awhile, her emotion passed away, and she had recommenced questioning me of her sister's intimacy with Captain Toulmin, when that gentleman came galloping up the avenue, gallantly waving his hand as he neared the house towards the window of the apartment where we had left Clara and her mother. Mary's countenance flushed scarlet, and she said quickly: 'Go, Gertrude—go at once and inform Captain Toulmin—privately will be best—that I must speak to him immediately in the library; you, of course, returning with him. This audacious insolence shall be endured no longer.'

I was a good deal startled by the energy of manner she displayed, as well as by her words, but nevertheless hastened promptly to perform her bidding. I awaited the captain's return from the stables in the hall, delivered my message *softo voce*, at which he seemed a good deal surprised, but of course bowed graceful acquiescence, and followed me to the library. Mary was standing at one of the windows, and as the door opened, turned and confronted the nonchalant man of fashion with a commanding sternness of aspect that



not only confused and astounded me, but appeared to disconcert greatly the gallant captain himself.

'Mary—that is, Mrs Calvert,' I stammered—'Clara's, I mean Mrs Herbert's, sister—Captain Toulmin.'

Captain Toulmin bowed fiercely, and ejaculated 'Ha!'

'I have sent for you, Captain Toulmin,' said Mary with an air befitting an empress, 'to request that you will immediately discontinue the offensive attentions which this lady, Miss Redburn, informs me'—

'Good heavens, Mary!' I burst out, interrupting her; and there I stopped, literally for want of words or breath—perhaps both. Talk of spontaneous combustion—I was red-hot from head to foot in an instant!

'That you will immediately,' resumed Mary with inexorable persistence, 'discontinue the offensive attentions which this lady, Miss Redburn, informs me you have presumed to obtrude upon my sister, Mrs Herbert.'

The man's frame seemed to dilate with passion, and his fierce eyes glared at Mrs Calvert as might those of a wild animal at bay, and about to spring upon the hunter. For a moment only could he confront her steady gaze, and he presently blurted out: 'Why—who—what is all this?'

'The request I have made,' continued Mary, 'is, in fact, a command which Captain Toulmin will not dare to disobey; and for this reason, that I happen to know where his wife, his cruelly abandoned wife, Lydia Burdon before marriage, is now residing.'

A dreadful imprecation, with which I will not stain the paper, burst from the detected culprit's lips; but he was thoroughly cowed, as well as all but maddened; whilst Mary, in her calm nobleness of contempt, looked positively beautiful—Juno-like.

'Upon condition, Captain Toulmin, that you at once cease those insulting attentions—that your visits here are very brief, not oftener than once in each week—and that your deportment is that of a person whose presence is barely tolerated from respect to your mother, Mrs Toulmin, which is the exact truth—I will not, for the present at least, disclose your disgraceful secret to my sister; my only motive for this forbearance being, that were I to do so, Mrs Toulmin would be, there can be no doubt, immediately deprived of the only home her son's vices have left her. Now, Gertrude, let us begone,' she added, after a slight pause, the captain's convulsing rage not permitting him articulate speech. 'This gentleman, I have no doubt, perfectly comprehends his position, and the line of conduct it behoves him to pursue.'

We then quitted the library, I in a perfect maze of wonder and excitement, not untinged with passing anger. 'Let us return to the shrubbery,' said Mary; 'we can converse more freely there. You are surprised, and a little vexed, dear Gertrude,' she went on to say as we left the house, 'that I should have mentioned you in connection with this unpleasant affair; but you will forgive me, I am sure, after hearing the reasons which induced me to do so. In the first place, it could do you no possible harm.'

'I am not quite sure of that. Captain Toulmin has numerous and influential friends; and should it happen that'—

'Listen, love,' interrupted Mary, 'till I have finished, and then object as much as you please. It is necessary, for several reasons, that appearances should, for the present, be saved with regard to Captain Toulmin; and, above all, that Clara's name shall not in any way be mixed up with that of a married man in the greedy, indiscriminating public ear. I have now a slight hold of him through his mother, which, were Clara supposed to be in my confidence, would of course be at an end. I fear, besides, that his showy exterior and plausible manners may have in some degree captivated my sister's fancy; and nothing is more certain to dissipate

that preference, if it exists, than the substitution, on his part, of an apparently causeless rudeness and neglect for the honeyed courtesies with which he has of late assailed her; because, thereby wounding her vanity—dear Clara's weak point, as you and I may confess to each other. Poor child!' added Mary, in a low, musing tone, 'she shall not, if I can help it, have her fall from the giddy state which so delights her, imbibed by the violent disruption of even an imaginary contract of affection.'

'You believe, then, that the life of little Francis is tainted mortally?'

Mary looked sharply in my face, hers at the same time faintly colouring, and said: 'To be sure—yes; and that is also your opinion, is it not?'

I confessed it was, and Mary proceeded with her reasons. 'I heartily wish Clara had never been placed in her present position. She arrived here a fortnight, as it chanced to fall out, before I had even heard of the dreadful accident—the sudden death, I mean, of—of the elder brother, Edmund Herbert'—

'You are trembling like a leaf, Mary, in this sharp wind: let us return to the house.'

'No, no; I have a few more words to say. Do you know,' she resumed quite briskly, 'that I very much like the Rev. Charles Atherley, who spent last evening with us—chiefly, I daresay, that he is so evidently devoted to Clara. That, now, is a connection which I would do all a sister might to foster and promote. Engaged to so worthy, so agreeable a person, a handsome independence assured to her, the fall of the present house of cards would not be felt so keenly by her, as otherwise I fear it will be.'

'You are not unworldly, Mary,' I said, with an involuntary smile, 'at least for others.'

'Nay, nay, Gertrude; do not say that. The chances are, you know, that a will has been made, and that Clara will have a fair share of the Herbert personal property; so that, expectations included, there is no such great disparity of fortune between her and the rector. And now, Gertrude,' concluded Mary, 'that we perfectly understand each other, let us in, and for the future endeavour, by every means within our reach, to promote dear Clara's permanent happiness and welfare.'

#### THE SERIOUS MASK OF THOMAS HOOD.

Hood's popularity as a comic writer has tended to obscure his reputation as a poet, which might otherwise have been higher than that of many of his contemporaries whose poetry has received a more liberal recognition. The reading public knows him mainly as a quaint satirist, or a merry jester, and seems to be unaware, or to have forgotten, that he is the author of some of the most impressive and beautiful poems in the language. His earlier performances, perhaps, were not much calculated to attract the general attention; being for the most part deficient in human interest, and built up too exclusively of imagery and trains of sentiment remote from ordinary feeling and conception. *The Plea of the Midsummer Fairies*, published in 1827, though a refined and graceful poem, and containing many exquisite descriptions, must, upon the whole, be pronounced a somewhat tedious and unintelligible production. For one thing, the fairies are now incapable of exciting modern sympathies; and therefore a long poem on their imaginary proceedings can seem little else, in serious times, than a mere frivolity or impertinence. There are abundant beauties in this little allegory, fine and original images, elegant, scholarly allusions—all prettily wrought in; and yet one cannot help perceiving that all this exquisite blossoming of a

gifted intellect is next to purposeless; that whatever aim it may profess to have, it serves no moral or æsthetic object, contains the seed of no abiding principle or feeling, and is, in short, nothing but an ingenious elaboration of images and poetical conceits.

In *Hero and Leander*, we have a more attractive theme; in Hood's management of which, however, there is much to be objected to. One cannot see the need of that mythological agency which he has introduced as a means of accounting for Leander's death. It is assuredly a more natural and human incident, and therefore a more poetical one, for a man to be drowned in an ordinary way through lack of strength in swimming, than to be intercepted and dragged down into the deep by a mermaid who had fallen in love with his fine face; and this for the simple reason, that nobody can in these days believe in the existence of the mermaid; and even if we are to consider her as a personification of the dangerous qualities of the ocean, she only serves to represent, in a circuitous manner, what would be sufficiently intelligible and more affecting if presented to us in a more natural and direct description. Nevertheless, this poem displays the presence of a rich poetic genius, and images and expressions might be taken from it worthy to live for ever. As one small specimen of its musical and masterly versification, we will quote a stanza that seems to us absolutely perfect. The sea-nymph having carried down Leander to the bottom of the waters, and unconsciously drowned him in the process, fancies him to be asleep, and endeavours to awaken him by many solicitous endearments. Among the pleasant things she says to him is this:—

Now lay thine ear against this golden sand,  
And thou shalt hear the music of the sea,  
Those hollow tunes it plays against the land—  
Is't not a rich and wondrous melody?  
I have lain hours, and fancied, in its tone,  
I heard the languages of ages gone!

In the same strain of sustained melody and picturesque expression, most of the poem is composed; and were it the object of a poem simply to pile up and connect a number of beautiful images and descriptions, there would be little or nothing to find fault with in Hood's performance. But we conceive the subject, from its intrinsic nature, required a totally different management. It is a story of passion, danger, and bereavement: it therefore demanded a form of representation in which all those violent elements should be passionately exhibited. Instead of this, Hood has turned the story into a pretty and fantastic allegory, and made its interest and attraction to depend on the fanciful ornaments with which he has adorned it in the telling. The defect of the poem, accordingly, lies not in any defect of poetical expression and illustration, but in what may be styled an organic misconception of the poetical attributes of the subject. The author, indeed, professes to have traced the story from 'the course of an old bass-relief,' and thus to have only written down in words what had been previously pictured to the poetic vision; but this cannot be offered in answer to our objection, inasmuch as the objection will apply equally to the sculptured as to the poetical representation. As it is, the poem, though abounding in fine fancies, is commonly found to be tedious in the reading; and hardly any one is likely to recur to it, unless it be a few leisured persons who are so peculiarly organised as to find a pleasure in minute analogies, or elaborate imagery without a purpose.

In *Lycus, the Centaur*, Hood has attempted a different style, and seems to us to have succeeded considerably better than in the two preceding poems. It is open to one of the objections before mentioned—that is to say,

the existence of a centaur is as *unbelievable* as that of a mermaid or a fairy; but, granting the centaur possible, a discriminating reader will not fail to perceive, that the poet has in a manner entered into the very nature of the creature, and reproduced all the qualities and sensations which it is supposable that a human being so transformed would be likely to possess. Lycus is thoroughly human in all respects, except his shape. The story being a classic one, Hood has properly enough aspired to give it a classic form. In this particular, we hold him to have been upon the whole successful: the piece reads like a fine translation of some Homeric fragment, save that it is less direct and simple, and more profuse of imagery than is the wont with Homer. The argument runs to this effect: Lycus being allured and detained by Circe within her magical dominions, comes, after a time, to be beloved by a water-nymph, who, desiring never again to part with him, sought to render him immortal, and for that purpose had recourse to the great sorceress, Circe, agreeably to her vindictive and deceitful nature, gives her an incantation to pronounce, by which Lycus would be turned into a horse; but, owing to the horrible effect of the charm upon the patient, she suddenly breaks off in the midst, and Lycus becomes a centaur. This, at first sight, does not seem a very poetical subject; but Hood's genius has thrown a life and beauty into it which are exceedingly striking and attractive. Lycus is made to tell his own story; and the narrative has a tone of profound pensiveness, which seems suitable to his condition—that of a conscious intellectual being imprisoned in the body of a brute. It is touching to follow him through the relation of his sorrows, heightened as they are by the remembrance of intense delights which he had for a short while experienced in the region of enchantment. In the depths of his degradation, the form of the fair water-nymph still haunts him, and would seem to be still beloved, notwithstanding the miseries that had befallen him through yielding to her passion. In his memory, she remains an imperishable fascination. Hood has also made her, as it were, alive with the glorious breath of his poetry. Let the reader note the mild splendour of this exquisite description:—

Thus far

I had read of my sorrow, and lay in the hush  
Of deep meditation; when, lo! a light crush  
Of the reeds, and I turned and looked round in the night  
Of new sunshine, and saw, as I sipped of the light  
Narrow-winking, the realised nymph of the stream,  
Rising up from the wave with the bend and the gleam  
Of a fountain; and o'er her white arms she kept throwing  
Bright torrents of hair, that went flowing and flowing  
In falls to her feet, and the blue waters rolled  
Down her limbs like a garment, in many a fold,  
Sun-spangled, gold-broidered, and fled far behind,  
Like an infinite train. So she came and reclined  
In the reeds, and I hungered to see her unequal  
The buds of her eyes, that would open and reveal  
The blue that was in them.

O my heart, it still dances  
When I think of the charm of her changeable glances;  
And my image, how small when it sank in the deep  
Of her eyes where her soul was—alas! now they weep,  
And none knoweth where. In what stream do her eyes  
Shed invisible tears? Who beholds where her sighs  
Flow in eddies, or sees the ascent of the leaf  
She has plucked with her tresses? Who listens her grief  
Like a far fall of waters, or hears where her feet  
Grow emphatic among the loose pebbles, and beat  
Them together?

After his transformation, Lycus escapes from the enchanted precincts, and wanders lonely about the world, shunning the abodes of men, yet from a distance looking down upon them with an inextinguishable interest and yearning. A profound longing at length seizes him to visit his native land; but he forbears, out



of regard to considerations which are thus beautifully expressed:—

Thus I wandered, companioned of grief, and forlorn,  
Till I wished for the land where my being was born;  
But what was that land with its love, where my home  
Was self-shut against me; for why should I come  
Like an after-distress to my gray-bearded father,  
With a blight to the last of his sight?—let him rather  
Lament for me dead, and shed tears in the urn  
Where I was not, and still in fond memory turn  
To his son even such as he left him. Oh! how  
Could I walk with the youth once my fellows, but now  
Like gods to my humbled estate?—or how bear  
The steeds once the pride of my eyes and the care  
Of my hands? Then I turned me, self-banished, and came  
Into Thessaly here, where I met with the same  
As myself.

The sense of outcast desolateness, the burden of immovable regret, and the stoical resignation which are here blended and wrought together with such mild mastery and proportion, evince a poetic genius little short of the very highest, and which, if employed upon subjects of popular and universal interest, might have produced works of as high a reputation as any that have appeared in modern times.

Hood's only remaining poem of any considerable length, is the *Golden Legend of Miss Kilmansegg and her Precious Leg*—a satirical performance of the most extravagant whimsicality, in ridicule of the folly of mammon-worship. Nothing can exceed the richness of grotesque invention, the riotous play of fancy, or the felicitous turns of witty and humorous expression, which are the distinguishing features of this wondrous production. It is, perhaps, the most characteristic of all the author's writings; inasmuch as all his comic peculiarities—all the excellences and all the faults of his individual style—are crowded and fused together in a sort of preposse and deliberate amalgamation, as though he had determined to shew what, in the way of eccentricity, his genius could produce. It abounds with all conceivable conceits—with every variety of fun, and farce, and drollery—with caricature, parody, puns, sly insinuations, and the most quaint and ludicrous allusions and similitudes—making altogether perhaps the most singular medley of humour, wit, and fanciful exaggeration that is to be found in the English language. But, running throughout, there is a distinct and serious moral purpose, which all this profusion of levity is designed to illustrate. We cannot say that, in an artistic point of view, it needed so profuse an illustration; yet the facetiousness and brilliancy of what is actually superfluous not only inclines one to tolerate it, but even to delight in it for its own intrinsic pleasantry. Within our present limits, we have no space to give any outline of the story, which, it must be confessed, is in some respects absurd; but, as a necessary introduction to the following extract, we may mention that the heroine, Miss Kilmansegg, having by an accident lost a leg, and, through her passion for affluent display, supplied its place by a member of solid gold, she is in due time sought in wedlock by a dashing foreign count, to whom, after an appropriate courtship, she is married. The count turns out to be a scamp of the first magnitude, and after squandering the lady's riches to a large extent, by gambling and other extravagances, begins at last to entertain sinister designs upon the golden limb. This much being stated, we presume the quotation will be intelligible.

Now the Precious Leg while cash was flush,  
Or the count's acceptance worth a rush,  
Had never excited dissension;  
But no sooner the stocks began to fall,  
Than, without any ossification at all,  
The limb became what people call  
A perfect bone of contention.

For altered days brought altered ways,  
And instead of the complimentary phrase,  
So current before her bridal,  
The countess heard in language low,  
That her Precious Leg was precious slow,  
A good un to look at, but bad to go,  
And kept quite a sum lying idle.

That instead of playing musical airs,  
Like Colin's foot in going up stairs—  
As the wife in the Scottish ballad declares—  
It made an infernal stumping;  
Whereas a member of cork, or wood,  
Would be lighter and cheaper, and quite as good,  
Without the unbearable thumping.

But spite of hint, and threat, and scoff,  
The Leg kept its situation;  
For legs are not to be taken off  
By a verbal amputation.

Persisting in her whim, and scornfully opposing the mercenary insinuations of the count, conjugal squalls and storms arise; and at last one day, in a passion, the countess destroys her will, thereby intimating her intention of cutting off her faithless partner from the future possession of her fortune. He, however, endures the business mildly, inwardly resolving to be at least

The Golden Leg's sole legatee,  
And that very night to administer!

So he kills the countess with her Golden Leg, and therewith departs somewhere into the 'subterraneous realms of Rascaldom,' and the reader hears of him no more.

In the verses just quoted, the reader will not fail to observe, that, though unquestionably witty, there is nothing in them which can be properly called *poetry*; there are, however, occasional passages in the poem where the strain rises into the real poetical element, and has a momentary sound of something like solemnity. The runaway ride in the Park and Piccadilly, whereby the lady is in danger of her life, and loses at least a limb, is strikingly and imaginatively described—the description being filled with all the terrifying images, all the sights and sounds, and fears that would naturally crowd upon a person in so perilous a situation; and we notice a soft and melancholy reflectiveness in such lines as the following, which form a sort of prelude to the catastrophe by which, at length, the hapless heroine is hurried out of existence:—

'Tis a stern and startling thing to think  
How often mortality stands on the brink  
Of its grave without any misgiving:  
And yet in this slippery world of strife,  
In the stir of human bustle so rife,  
There are daily sounds to tell us that Life  
Is dying, and Death is living!

Ay, Beauty the Girl, and Love the Boy,  
Bright as they are with hope and joy,  
How their souls would sadden instantly,  
To remember that one of those wedding-bells  
Which ring so merrily through the dells,  
Is the same that knells  
Our last farewells,  
Only broken into a canter!

But breath and blood set doom at nought—  
How little the wretched countess thought,  
When at night she unloosed her sandal,  
That the Fates had woven her burial-cloth,  
And that Death, in the shape of a death's-head moth,  
Was fluttering round her candle!

From Hood's comparatively long poems, we turn

now to his smaller pieces, wherein, as we conceive, he has attained his highest and most memorable success. These are of several varieties of style, the best of which belong to what is termed the homely tragic narrative, and a peculiar form of the lyric, in which lightness and pathos are intermingled. Of the former sort is his *Dream of Eugene Aram*, wherein, we think, he has fully realised the only poetical conception of which Aram's story is susceptible. Hood depicts him as telling the tale of his own crime, under the similitude of a dream, to an innocent school-boy in a nook of the cricket-ground of the school at Lynn, where he was an usher at the time of his arrestment. It is a thrilling and ghastly tale, rendered all the more effective by the contrast of peaceful images presented in the scene wherein it is described to be related. Never was the poetry of *misery* more admirably conceived, nor more naturally and powerfully represented. The reader is made to sympathise with the sorrow, the remorse, and fears of a man who had committed a great crime; but the sympathy extends only to his wretchedness, and never for a moment to the deed of which he had been guilty. Herein, as we conceive, Hood has accomplished a feat of poetic art which has very rarely been equalled, and wrought a moral effect into his poem which, considering the subject-matter, could not have been achieved except through the operation of a pure and refined genius.

Of our poet's grave and pathetic lyrics we may mention, as among the most excellent and striking, his well-known *Song of the Shirt*, and another which is entitled *The Bridge of Sighs*. The former is notable, perhaps, more for its immense popularity, gained through its publication in the pages of *Punch*, than for any great artistic beauty or brilliancy of execution which it can be strictly said to possess. As an appeal in behalf of the distressed needlewomen of London, it would appear to have produced a great impression on the public mind, and undoubtedly stimulated, if it did not altogether originate, the social enterprises designed subsequently for their relief. It has been remarked, that not the least striking and impressive quality of this song, is its half-jesting tone, its lightness and jocular presentment of the tragic elements which form the burden of its purpose. With an adroit and delicate hand, the poet has cast into the plaintive wailing of the forlorn seamstress here and there a quaint conceit; thereby wonderfully enhancing the touching and melancholy impression of the strain. Let us quote, in the way of illustration, the two following stanzas:—

Work—work—work  
Till the brain begins to swim;  
Work—work—work  
Till the eyes are heavy and dim!  
Seam, and gusset, and band—  
Band, and gusset, and seam,  
Till over the buttons I fall asleep,  
And sew them on in a dream!  
O men, with sisters dear!  
O men, with mothers and wives!  
It is not linen you're wearing out,  
But human creatures' lives!  
Stitch—stitch—stitch,  
In poverty, hunger, and dirt;  
Sewing at once, with a double thread,  
A shroud as well as a shirt!

From the specimens now given of Hood's serious poetry, we suppose the reader hitherto unacquainted with it will obtain a tolerably fair impression of its leading characteristics. It will be seen that a subtle and fertile fancy, the liveliest wit, a delicate perception of minute and remote analogies, and an exquisite command of language, are the most prominent of his intellectual qualities; while, as regards his moral peculiarities, it will be noticed that, with a constant tendency to light-

ness and levity of manner, he always, more or less, inclines to sound the depths of that unfathomable solemnity, and even awfulness, on which the hopes and fears of mortals are for ever tossed or resting, as on a sea whose shores and limits are unknown. Life is immensely serious to him; but in the dimness and uncertainty towards which so many of its adventures tend, he would exhort his fellow-voyagers on the grand abyss to take heart and cheer themselves, to laugh and genially while away the time, and even to temper their inevitable despondency by quaint and fantastical diversions. Often, under his grotesque masking, there is an earnestness too profound for tears, and which fails not to impress us the more intensely because of the disguise in which we find it. Strictly speaking, one cannot call Hood a great poet; but that he is a true, pure, and very admirable one, there can be no hesitation in declaring; and we would here commend his poems to the more general attention of English readers, who, as far as we can perceive, have not yet given them any very extensive consideration. It is nine years since they were first collected in two small volumes; and at the present writing, they would appear not to have passed through a first edition. This we must esteem a circumstance very much to be regretted, and rather indicative of something of that popular indifference to genuine poetry which has been ascribed to the present age; though when we call to mind the numerous editions which some of our patriot versifiers can point to in proof of a popular appreciation, we could almost hope that poor Hood has somehow been simply overlooked; and that the readers of poetry are not sufficiently aware of the beauty, truthfulness, and wisdom which, in unpretending forms, he has left behind him for their delight.

#### CAPE HORN.

If any intelligent school-boy were asked to name the three most geographically remarkable capes in the world, he would probably answer, after a moment's consideration—Cape Horn, Cape of Good Hope, and North Cape of Lapland. He would be quite right. The trio mentioned are undoubtedly the foremost of landmarks, and the richest in historical and romantic associations. It is usual to speak of them as the respective continental terminations of America, Africa, and Europe, but this is only literally correct as regards the Cape of Good Hope. A glance at a map of the globe will shew that some degree of resemblance exists in the positions of Cape Horn and the North Cape. To describe the former, is the object of this paper; but we may here speak briefly of the latter, on the score of geographical contrast. An arm of the sea, called Magerö Sund, or Sound, flows between the mainland of Finmark—the real termination of the continent of Europe in a northern direction—and the island of Magerö—which we may roughly estimate at a score of miles in length, and a dozen in its greatest breadth—the northern headland of Magerö forming the North Cape;\* and another remarkable projection to the eastward is known as *The Horn* (so named from its shape), and is a noted landmark for ships sailing to and from the White Sea. During the greater portion of the year there is little daylight in this high latitude: during upwards of two months in winter, the sun never rises; and during a corresponding period in summer, it never sets. The reader may imagine the aspect of the Cape in its season of storms and darkness.

The mighty continent of America gradually tapers southward, until it ends with the desolate country of Patagonia—fitting home for a race of gigantic savages!

\* See 'Visit to the North Cape,' in *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal*, No. 382, Second Series.

The Straits of Magellan—so named after the daring Spanish captain who was the first to penetrate through them into the unknown Pacific Ocean—separate the extremity of Patagonia from the large and singularly shaped island of Tierra del Fuego, which very evidently was torn by some mighty convulsion of nature from the mainland long ages ago. Ships sometimes, but rarely, prefer risking a passage through the Magellan Straits to weathering Cape Horn. Staten Land is an island separated from Tierra del Fuego on the eastward by the Straits of Le Maire. Numerous small, sterile, rocky islands are grouped to the southward of Tierra del Fuego, and are known by various appellations; but the most southern and desolate cluster are very appropriately named *The Hermits*;\* and of these Hermits, the one furthest of all to the south terminates in the celebrated Cape Horn. Beyond Cape Horn are yet other islands, but they are much too remote to be spoken of in connection with the continent of South America and its contiguous isles. Cape Horn itself is in latitude 56 degrees south. Who first discovered it, is not positively known; but it certainly received its present designation from the Dutch navigator Van Schouten, who reached it in the *Unity*, in January 1616.

Individually, our earliest ideas of Cape Horn were derived from the voyages of Dampier—who, by the way, influenced many succeeding navigators by the success of his resolute attempt to double the dreaded Cape. The *Wager*, one of Anson's squadron, was wrecked on Tierra del Fuego, and her crew underwent a long series of unparalleled sufferings, which are vividly detailed in the narrative of Admiral Byron (grandfather to the poet), who was a midshipman in the *Wager*, and was one of the very few survivors who reached England again, after five years spent in dismal wandering and adventure subsequent to the wreck. What Anson himself experienced off Cape Horn may be gathered from the words of the writer of the voyage, who says: 'We had a continual succession of such tempestuous weather, as surprised the oldest and most experienced mariners on board, and obliged them to confess that what they had hitherto called storms, were inconsiderable gales compared with the violence of these winds, which raised such short, and, at the same time, such mountainous waves, as greatly surpassed in danger all seas known in any other part of the globe.' Captain Cook was thirty-four days tempest-tossed off the Cape on his first voyage, although on his second he met with more calms than storms on the same spot. No marvel that we are impressed with an appalling notion of the dangers of doubling Cape Horn from the perusal of such narratives. The ill-fated *Bounty*, for instance, on her outward voyage, encountered tremendous weather off the Horn, and after fighting against the elements for thirty days, Lieutenant Bligh gave up the attempt to double it in despair, and ordering the helm a-weather, to the extreme joy of his worn-out crew, bore away for the Cape of Good Hope to refit.

Down to a comparatively recent period, seamen, influenced both by tradition and personal experience, almost universally regarded Cape Horn as a spot of the most evil omen, and associated the idea of doubling it with every imaginable danger and unimaginable suffering. Nor were these terrors, ascribed to the vicinity of the Cape, altogether fanciful, but rather the reverse, as we shall presently shew. It must, however, be borne in mind, that the ships which doubled, or attempted to double, the Horn, down to even fifty years ago, were very poorly fitted to contend with such tremendous elemental warfare as frequently prevails at the junction

of the Atlantic and Pacific. Only those who are conversant with nautical matters, can conceive the prodigious improvement which has taken place during the present generation in the build and outfit of ships destined for long voyages; and, we may add, that seamanship, both theoretical and practical, so far as anyrate as the officers are concerned, has improved in a commensurate degree. Compare for a moment the ships sailed by Captain Cook, or Bligh's miserable little ship the *Bounty*, with the magnificent Australian liners of the present day! What astonishing progress is manifest! Let us also remember, that until the commencement of the nineteenth century, very few ships of any description were sent into the Pacific. At rare intervals, discovery-ships penetrated round the Horn, and a few South Sea whalers were beginning to follow, but the majority of the vessels which doubled the Cape were Spanish and Americans, bound to Chili, Peru, and California. Until even a dozen, or at most a score of years ago, nearly all ships which proceeded to Australia from England, returned by the same route as they went (that is, by God Hope), but now they all, except the mail-steamers, circumnavigate the globe by boldly doubling Cape Horn. For one English ship that doubled the Horn in the time of Captain Cook, five hundred or a thousand now do so—and their captains never think of publishing even a sixpenny pamphlet to narrate the feat for the admiration of posterity. A quarto volume would hardly have sufficed in Cook's time! Fifty years ago, it was a rare thing to meet with a sailor who could boast that he had sailed round the globe; but now you have only to step down to the dock-side in any large seaport, and you will find that probably one-half, if not two-thirds, of all the grown-up, long-voyage seamen you question, have doubled Cape Horn—some of them, it may be, a score of times. Let not the reader, however, entertain the idea that these men have actually *seen* the Cape. On the contrary, we do not believe that one ship in a hundred that doubles it ever approaches sufficiently near to distinctly  *sight* the redoubtable Cape; for so little do seamen love it, they always stand well off to the southward in rounding. Staten Land is much more frequently seen by passing ships; but the men who actually know most of Cape Horn and its vicinity, are the daring North American *sealers*, who have long pursued their hazardous calling thereabouts. And should the long-projected Darien Canal ever unite the Atlantic and the Pacific—thereby saving ships bound to the South Sea Isles, or to California and Peru, the immense labour of going round South America—the number of vessels doubling the Horn will materially decrease.

And now for a more particular description of the Horn itself. In 1820, his majesty's ship *Comceay*, commanded by Captain Basil Hall, had occasion to double it, and approached unusually near. One night, they saw a bright red light, which appeared to them only eight or ten miles distant; but in the morning 'we found,' says Captain Hall, 'by means of bearings taken with the compass, that it actually was upwards of a hundred miles from the ship, on the mainland of Tierra del Fuego. It is not improbable that this or a similar volcano may have led Magellan to give the title of "Land of Fire" to this desolate region. By six o'clock in the morning of 26th November, we had approached within ten or twelve miles of Cape Horn, and in sailing round to enter the Pacific, had an opportunity of seeing it on a variety of bearings. Under every aspect, it presents a bold and majestic appearance, worthy of the limit to such a continent. It is a high, precipitous, black rock, conspicuously raised above the neighbouring land, utterly destitute of vegetation, and extending far into the sea in bleak and solitary grandeur.' Thus far Basil Hall, and we cannot do better than to subjoin to his brief sketch a more animated picture of Cape Horn

\* We believe, however, that this group is not so named on account of its solitude, but from Jacques l'Hermite, who commanded a Dutch squadron that visited, or discovered, the islands in 1623.



by Fenimore Cooper, in one of his latest and most remarkable books, *The Sea Lions*:—'The land was broken, high, and of a most sterile aspect.... a sort of pyramid, which, occupying a small island, stood isolated, in a measure, and some distance in advance of other and equally ragged ranges of mountains.' He describes Cape Horn as an irregular peak of considerable height, and says: 'The earth probably does not contain a more remarkable sentinel than this pyramid. .... There it stood, actually the Ultima Thule of this vast continent, or, what was much the same, so closely united to it as to seem a part of our moiety of the globe, looking out on the broad expanse of waters. The eye saw to the right the Pacific; in front, was the Southern or Antarctic Ocean; and on the left, the Great Atlantic. Turning north, they beheld the high lands of Tierra del Fuego, of which many of the highest peaks were covered with snow. The pyramid on which they were, however, was no longer white with congealed rain, but stood, stern and imposing, in its native brown.' We may add, that the aspect of Cape Horn has frequently been compared to that of a recumbent lion—an out-sentinel of Nature, guarding the termination of the American continent. The resemblance to a couching lion is said to be surprising from some points of view.

At Cape Horn, the month of February may be considered midsummer; and the worst and stormiest month of the year is said to be July, when the sun rises at 8-30 A.M., and sets at 3-30 P.M. Even in the finest weather, the air in the vicinity is usually dark and menacing; and the waves fall on the rocks with a deafening hollow boom, now and then varied by a thundering prolonged roar, as though a thousand hungry lions were roaring in concert; and the spray dashes high up in the air, which it fills with vapoury mist, so that the grim old Horn is usually enshrouded with a ghost-like veil. The jagged rocks split up the waters, so as to form countless currents and miniature whirlpools; and the tides, also, have a very heavy rise. Albatrosses, Cape-pigeons, stormy-petrels, gulls, and other wild sea-birds fly around, adding their discordant, startling screams to the incessant din of the elements. In the sky, directly overhead, may be seen at night the Magellan clouds, three in number—one dark, and two white. Yet more interesting is the Southern Cross—four lustrous stars of great magnitude, which form an extremely luminous and striking constellation in the shape of a cross; as celebrated in the southern hemisphere, as the North Star and Great Bear are in the northern portion of the globe. The junction of the two mightiest oceans at all times produces a swell of the sea off the Cape, surpassing any similar phenomenon elsewhere; and by the peculiar feel of that swell alone, the experienced mariner can tell if he is on the point of entering the Pacific. Waves are here sometimes seen more than a quarter of a mile between trough and trough. The heaviest seas of all generally tumble in from the south-west. Such, as we have thus briefly sketched, is the aspect of the Cape and the adjoining ocean at even favourable seasons; but try to imagine what the spectacle must be in stormy weather, when the days of winter are short and dense, and the nights long and dark—the snow and hail pelting mercilessly—the cold intense—the salt-water freezing as it falls on deck—the shrouds and rigging coated with ice—the sails as stiff as sheet-iron—the billows mountainous—icebergs rolling in all directions—and the ship, perchance, deep-laden and weak-handed! This is no fancy picture, but a frequent reality. Sailors may well call it 'man-killing' work under such circumstances, even if they manage to carry through everything into the lower latitudes of the Pacific or the Atlantic, as the case may be. As an instance of what even a powerful, well-manned ship may have to encounter, the American frigate *Brandywine*, some years ago, was exactly two months battling with

the elements off the Cape, and lost many brave men during that protracted struggle. Not a year passes without several ships foundering off Cape Horn, and very few indeed weather it without a sharp taste of its proverbial quality. It is true, that sometimes a ship, by keeping well to the southward, and being favoured with a fair and powerful wind, will rapidly and easily pass from one ocean to the other; but such a case is decidedly exceptional. A large and stout steamer would undoubtedly be able to double the Cape at any time, and in any weather, much sooner than the swiftest and finest sailing-vessel, as steam would enable her to make headway in the teeth of a gale; but even the mightiest steamer would at times be almost or altogether baffled.

Beyond all comparison, the most vivid and intrinsically account of doubling Cape Horn ever published, is that by Dana, in his *Two Years Before the Mast*. We never have forgotten the extremely vivid impression that narrative made on us on its first perusal: it clenched all our former notions on the subject. The reader knows what is before him when Dana tells how they patched and quilted their jackets, trousers, &c., for a 'Cape Horn rig,' consisting of 'thick boots; south-westerns, coming over our necks and ears; thick trousers and jackets; and some with oilcloth suits over all. Mittens, too, we wore on deck.' How affecting and suggestive, too, is this passage, after the worst of their long struggle was over, and Staten Land was not far distant: 'A bright gleam of sunshine broke out, and shone down the companion-way, and through the sky-light, lighting up everything below, and sending a warm glow through the heart of every one. It was a sight we had not seen for weeks—an omen, a God-send! Even the roughest and hardest face acknowledged its influence.' Dana did not see Cape Horn, but we may appropriately conclude this paper by quoting his description of what he saw of Staten Land:—'The land was the island of Staten Land, just to the eastward of Cape Horn; and a more desolate spot I never wish to set eyes upon—bare, broken, and girt with rock and ice; with here and there, between the rocks and broken hillocks, a little stunted vegetation of shrubs. It was a place well suited to stand at the junction of two oceans, beyond the reach of human cultivation, and encounter the blast and snows of a perpetual winter. Yet, dismal as it was, it was a pleasant sight to us, not only as being the first land we had seen, but because it told us we had passed the Cape, and were in the Atlantic; and that, with twenty-four hours of this breeze, we might bid defiance to the Southern Ocean.'

#### THE WHORTING-PARTY.

'A HOLIDAY! a holiday!' exclaimed Everard Damon, bursting into the school-room where his sisters and his little brother were busily preparing their lessons and exercises for the next day. 'Away with your books, girls! down with that slate, Phil! papa has proclaimed a holiday for to-morrow, in honour of Jacie's birthday; and there is no need of preparation when no work is to be done. So away with it all, and come and settle our plans with me, and Bob, and Otto'—and ending this uproarious harangue with an equally uproarious 'hurrah!' Everard threw his cap to the roof, and then standing for a moment on his head, with his legs quivering in the air, he suddenly 'righted,' and bounded out of the room, calling again on the others to come into the garden. But the young gentleman was speedily recalled by the united voices of the children and their governess, who, unseen by him, had been seated in a deep window-seat; and not a little was he abashed when he found that his ecstacy had been witnessed by her. 'Oh, I beg your pardon, Miss Colville,' said he, returning; 'I really did not see you, or I should not have made such a row in

your presence. But do, please, let the girls come; we want them so much to help to settle about to-morrow.

Miss Colville, the kind friend of the children, either suspecting that little would be done whilst their young minds were afloat on other subjects, or else feeling that a few additional hours of summer joy would do more good than harm, gave a smiling dismissal to the three fair girls and the curly-pated Phil, whose eyes all waited on her glance; and soon were the brothers and sisters assembled in gay consultation on the shaded bank in the paddock.

'And what is to be done, Evvie?' said Rachel, a sprightly girl of thirteen. 'I hope we are to go somewhere.'

'Somewhere! I should think so,' exclaimed Robert, their eldest brother, who came up at the moment; 'but where—what is it to be? Now guess, girls; guess, Phil; and "Guess," was echoed by all who were in the secret.

'I guess a sail on the river,' said one; 'And I guess a picnic to Halswell and Enmore,' shouted another; and a third exclaimed: 'And I think it will be to go to Burnham, and dine on the sands, and pick up shells.'

'All wrong—all wrong!' screamed the boys in delight. 'Now I tell you,' added Robert: 'it is a picnic, and it is not—at least not a true picnic—for we are to take all the grub, or get it there. It is to be a grand whorting-party in the Quantocks. You know Jacinth will be nineteen to-morrow, and it is papa and mamma's wedding-day too; so papa is going to give this party—only, instead of having it in the house, it is to be in the beautiful valley among the hills, where Mrs Maine lives; and now, which of us are to go? Guess!' and again the guessing, of which children are so fond, went from lip to lip. The elder ones seemed pretty secure that they would have part in the projected party; but the younger branches of the family looked sobered and doubtful, for, of course, in so large a family, it was not usual for more than a few to be included in such arrangements.

'Well, Phil, you for one do not expect to go, I should think?' said Otto, a good-humoured lad of sixteen, but who rather delighted in teasing the young ones. 'As you happen to be seventh, you will allow that you have not much chance?'

'Come, come, Otto,' said Robert, seeing poor Phil beginning to fight with some most unmanly tears, which appeared disposed to overflow: 'we will not allow any nonsense. Cheer up, my boy; I have some of the best of the whole to tell: we are all to go—all—every one—and you have to thank Jacie for it! Papa said it was her day, and he would give her her choice, either to ask the Seymours and Celthorpes, and some more gay people, and take only two or three of us elder ones; or to turn out all the contents of the school-room and nursery, and have every one, down to Nance and "baby-boy;" and Jacie chose the latter. Now, I ask you all, wasn't it good-natured of her?'

'Oh, it was just like her!' echoed from one to another of the children. 'She is always trying what she can do to give us pleasure.'

'If I had heard papa ask her, I'd have wagered anything,' said little Phil, whose eyes now beamed with delight, 'that she would have said just what she did. Well, now, go on, Bob, and tell us all about it.'

'Well, then, the short and the long of the matter is, that papa and mamma say they cannot manage for more than twenty-two, besides the necessary servants; and we are all to get there the best way we can—some on the ponies, and some in the cab way, and those who can do no better, in the great wagon that is to carry the servants and the provisions; that is to set out an hour or two before the rest, because it will go slower. But we are all to start early, to be in time to pick whorts for the pies and puddings before it gets too hot. Whort-picking is to be the grand object of the day; but those who prefer it are to fish; and mamma and Alicia mean

to sketch; and Jacinth is going to botanise; and the babes can swim little boats in the brooks, and grub about for flowers, and make any fun they like; and a capital day it will be, I suspect.'

And now we will leave our young ones to consult about what fishing-tackle, and baskets, and other gear they should take, and to fill up the hours which must intervene between the present moment and the prospective pleasure in the best way they can, only asking those of our readers who have reached the summit of the hill of life to look back a little, and recollect whether they have not sometimes found, in earlier days, that the gush of pleasure which the prospect of such a time of simple enjoyment as that which lay before our young friends induces, is not a very precious thing? and whether the hours of anticipation which precede such a period, are not in themselves often more full of life's gayest hopes and enjoyment, even than those hours they forestall?

We will ourselves fill up the interval by inquiring a little into the nature of the fruit which it was the object of our merry party to 'victimise.' The very pretty little shrub which bears the berries—called in different localities by the names of whorts, whortle-berries, hurts, hurtleberries, bilberries, and blaeberrys—grows about a foot, or from that to two feet in height, and very bushy and thick, like a little myrtle. Its leaves are small, and something like the myrtle in form, but serrated at the edge; of a delicate green when young, but becoming more dark and hard towards autumn. This shrub bears very abundant flowers, each placed separately; in form bell-shaped, like some sorts of heath, waxy, and of a delicate greenish white, richly tinted with pink. These pretty blossoms appear in May, when a branch of the plant is a lovely addition to a nosegay. In July, the berries they produce are ripe, and almost as pretty as the blossom which precedes them. They are about the size of currants; but of course, as the blossoms stand separate, so do the berries, and not in strings or branches; so that each berry must be severally gathered; but as there are a great many on each branch, this is not so long a process as might be imagined. There is no relic of calyx remaining on the fruit, as that organ is what is termed 'superior,' and the swollen receptacle which grows below it is the edible part; neither do the remains of petals so cleave to the berry as in the currant; its form is globular, like a tiny plum, only that there is a little cup-like depression on the top, and it is covered with an elegant blue bloom, like an untouched grape. Its colour is a deep purplish black. This plant is of the natural order *Ericaceæ*, and its proper name *Vaccinium myrtillus*.

The geographical range of the whortleberry is extended through the north of Europe, Africa, and Asia. It is found also in North America, and grows at a very high degree of north latitude. In Iceland, it is abundant; and at Nootka Sound, and in Nova Scotia, it may be found, but nowhere is it more plentiful than in some parts of our own land; and yet, although so freely produced in some counties, that all the world seems to eat nothing but whorts in the season, there are other counties where such a berry has never been found, and the inhabitants—poor things!—have not the least idea of what is meant by a whort-pie.

This little lowly shrub is one of God's gifts to the poor of the land. It does not grow in pasture-fields or cultivated and enclosed lands. It defies the gardener's skill, and the agriculturist's cupidity. Where the heath and hill are wild and uncultured, free to man and beast, there does it spring up in its simple beauty and its rich profusion, and there may all who are willing gather of its abundant produce, none saying 'Nay.' In Somersetshire, Devonshire, and other counties where it abounds, it is eagerly collected by the poor women and children of the district, and sold at about

4d. a quart. Nor is a market ever wanting; for so delicious are the berries, that poor and rich alike delight in them, either made into pies and puddings, or stewed with currants, and eaten cold with rich cream and bread, or boiled rice. It is a juicy, cool, rich fruit, and considered especially wholesome; though it certainly has one fault—that of leaving a deep purplish stain on the lips and teeth of those who eat it; and you may pick out from your row of scholars or teachers at the Sunday-school those who have partaken of whorts, in some form or other, by the deep tinge with which their mouths are dyed. This evil may, however, be in a great degree obviated, and the flavour of the fruit greatly improved, by the addition of about one-third of red or white currants, their acidity tending to counteract the effect. In the Black Forest, there is a variety of *Vaccinium myrtillus* that bears white berries. Many kinds of game eat the whortleberries, and, indeed, chiefly live on them in the autumn.

But to return to our holiday-party. The wagon set forth at six on the brightest of July mornings. It contained Nance, and her assistant Hester; Phil, who kept his resolution to 'take time by the forelock'; Emily, Kate, Blanche, and baby Basil, a roundabout pet of some two years old, not the least vociferous of the party. Moreover, there were two or three extra servants. It would not be easy to tell what the wagon contained beside the living freight. Hampers full of chickens, and cold meat, and veal-pies; great cakes and fruit-tarts for those who had not taste enough to like the provincial dainties that were to be prepared on the spot; and abundant supplies of pale ale and pleasant British wines, besides all the paraphernalia of plates, knives and forks, &c., usual on such occasions, were among its contents. A highly approved part of the plan was, that the young ones were to breakfast in the wagon; to facilitate which, a large basket of ready-cut bread and butter was packed; and they were to call at a farm some two miles on their way, and there obtain supplies of new milk, fresh and warm from the cow, and so jog on, eating and drinking as they went. The rest of the party breakfasted at home, and set forward on their way in joyous spirits, their guests being to meet them at the end of the little journey.

The scenery of the spot on which they had agreed to meet—O how lovely was it! but too rich in verdant straths, densely wooded combs—as low hills rising from a valley, and clothed with trees, are called in the south-west of England—gushing streams, and lovely herbage, to be described with mere pen and ink. Then the stretch of heathy hills, all flecked with coppices and thickets, with sunny banks whereon not only 'the wild thyme blows,' but others where the fragrant wood-strawberries might be found in abundance; and between these banks and thickets, broad spaces, covered with purple heath and golden gorse, all alive with bees and butterflies; and the pure full blue of the cloudless vault of heaven hanging over all the radiant sunlit landscape in unbroken splendour. It was a glorious day and a glorious scene, to which all the fair and gay young beings who now stood gathered round the door of a rustic farm, which lay in one extremity of the valley, consulting over their separate plans of amusement, added a new and most attractive feature. They were a merry group, and we must introduce them individually to the reader. Jacinth Damon, the queen of the day, must take the lead. No doubt, having heard of the young lady's good-nature in giving up the power of inviting gay young friends, for the purpose of making room for a whole host of little brothers and sisters and their nurses, our readers will have depicted her in their imaginations as a fair soft blonde, with a mild countenance, and probably a little what boys would call 'muffish.' We are sorry to disappoint them, if such is their idea of her; but our Jacinth—or, as she

was usually called, *Jacie*—was no such thing. She was as merry and sparkling a brunette as Rosalind, and almost as saucy—full of life and frolic, and liking nothing better than a scamper on the hills or a dance on the green-sward. Alicia, her next in age, a plain but intelligent girl, with abundant good-humour. With Robert, Otto, Rachel, and Everard, we have already made acquaintance; and these, with the five younger ones who had come in the wagon, went far to make up half the number of allotted guests. Then there were Mr and Mrs Damon, and Aunt Margaret, who was Mrs Damon's sister, and Miss Colville, the girls' nice governess, making up the number fifteen, so that seven visitors only were of the party. There had been some consultation as to who these should be; some had been elected by acclamation; but there had been long balancing before it could be decided which of several regular 'eligibles' should be included, and which, by consequence, excluded. Annie Cleveland, Jacinth's inseparable friend, was of course called for *mem. con.*, and this involved Salome, her sister, who could not be left at home. Then Phil besought for Billie to go too, Billie being his inseparable, so the three Clevelands were fixed on; then some one suggested Hugh Scott and Alicia—they *must* go. 'Well, be it so,' said Mr Damon; 'and we will then ask Mr and Mrs Scott; they will be companions for mamma and me, and that will make up our number.' And now just intimating that Mr Scott was a lively, agreeable barrister, and his wife the delight of all young people, from her cheerful sociability and great capabilities of amusing; that Hugh was a young Cantab, of some distinction in the schools; and Alice a fine gentle, almost child of sixteen—we will leave the party to speak for themselves.

All being assembled in and round the porch of the farmhouse, a lively discussion was going on respecting their several projects for passing the morning. Mrs Damon and Alicia, together with Salome Cleveland, were soon seated in a sheltered nook amongst some trees, a little way down the combe, surrounded with pallets and moist colours, and all the other belongings of water-colour drawing; and each so much absorbed in transferring the likeness of some stately group of trees, or picturesque gable-end of a cottage, to her paper, that no sound save the ripple of the brook, or other such sweet reminders of country seclusion, was to be heard in their neighbourhood. The little ones had gambled away with Hester and their baskets, too eager to await the settling of preliminaries, and the rest stood still deliberating. It was so far decided that one party should go with the young ones to the whortleberry-thickets to gather fruit; and the rest were, with rod and line, to follow the brook, and strip it of its finny inhabitants, bringing home—as they hoped—enough of fish to dine all the farmhouse family and the servants, besides their own fifteen selves and friends. But there was a hitch somewhere as to who would be of either party. Hugh Scott could not make up his mind. He was an undoubted adept in the art of angling, and known to be especially fond of it; but, strange to say, on this occasion he declared eventually that 'he did not care a straw for fishing; give him 'the fine open hillside, and the merriment of the little ones!—he should 'go whorting.'

A latent smile flickered on the eyes of some of the party at this sudden fit of love for children, for it was quite a new feature in his character. There certainly was lurking mischief in the minds of some of the party; and we are sorry to say that a comical movement of the lip, and a saucy light in the eye, gave indications that Miss Jacie had a share in it. Alas! that we should have to confess it; but truth compels us to say that a spice of coquetry, or something that, under less wise guidance than that of her excellent parents, might have become such, might be found in Jacinth's character; and dearly did she delight in shewing her power. On



the present occasion, it had been generally understood that she was to join the hillside detachment; she had said nothing, but the others had reckoned on her for the whorting-party, and named her as one of them; and it was guessed that Hugh's enthusiasm for children arose from his desire for their sister's company.

Both parties were to proceed together as far as the entrance of a copse which lay in their road to the meadows; here the fruit-seekers were to branch off, and here they all paused for a few moments.

'I go with you, papa,' said Jacinth. 'I shall not disturb your fishing; but you know I want to look for the "skull-cap," and some other plants that grow by the brook: come, Annie;' and away sprang the two girls, without casting a glance at the other party.

'O Jacie, don't go; we cannot do without you,' shouted the younger ones; but it was all in vain: Jacie and Annie were already out of hearing. Poor Hugh! his dilemma was serious; however, after for some time striving to join in the laughter and mirth which surrounded him, he found that he could no longer endure 'letting I dare not wait upon I would'—and suddenly remembering (lucky fellow!) that he had some part of his father's fishing apparatus in his pocket, he shot off down the hillside in the direction of the brook, and as the old allegories say, 'we saw him no more!'

And now, as we proceeded onwards, the copse became an exceedingly animated scene. We should, however, scarcely call it a copse; it was rather a succession of thickets and bits of underwood, scattered over little knolls and banks, with fine strips of soft hillside turf between; and it might well be questioned which were the gayest and most lovely—the multitudes of birds and gorgeous butterflies and dragonflies skimming about in the air, or the brilliant and joyous children, and young girls and boys, who sprang about among the flowers on the earth, shouting with joy as they discovered grove after grove of the pretty whort-shrubs laden with their blooming fruit.

Soon were the baskets filled to the brim with the sweet berries; and despatching some of the motley crew to the farm with them, and strict injunctions to Mrs Maine, the farmer's wife—who, before her elevation to that rank, had been for many years their cook—to be sure to make plenty of pies and puddings, 'enough for dinner and supper too,' our young ones seated themselves in groups to enjoy the hour as they listed. Here was a party of what Robert called 'babes,' gathering wood-strawberries, and threading the scarlet gems like beads on long spikes of grass, some of them every now and then springing up to chase some glittering insect which passed speedily by, or to make an excursion to a neighbouring bank, where some floral treasure was thought to lurk; there was a group gathered round Mrs Scott, who was delighting some of the elder ones by reading to them some scenes from *The Midsummer Night's Dream*; whilst a third party were stretching themselves on a 'flowery lay,' in earnest talk, enjoying those outpourings of mutual confidence so essential to the joy of youthful hearts, and planning, with perhaps a full allowance of sentiment and romance, schemes for their future lives—dream-like anticipations, full of bright lights and vivid expectations.

The hour proposed for dinner now drew near; and Nance, gathering her charge together, drove them before her like a flock of young frolicsome lambs to the home-pastures, frisking and gamboling, and upsetting themselves and each other in their mirth, as untired as if they had not all been up from five in the morning. The elders followed, as gay at heart, though a little more restrained in manner; and near the farm they fell in with the fishing-party, who, having consigned the contents of their baskets to the hands of Mrs Maine, were comparing notes, and greatly exultant in the full success of their piscatorial efforts.

Jacinth, and Annie too, had been successful in their

pursuit. 'It was lucky that I had my father's reel in my pocket, Miss Damon,' said Hugh. 'You would scarcely have been able to get at that asphodel without my help, for the bog was rather of the wettest.'

'Well, my good fellow,' observed his father, 'I am glad you found something to do in that way; for really I do not see any other particular good you did us. Why, Hugh, you boast of being a good fisherman: I do not think you caught a fish to-day.'

Hugh blushed, and the same odd smile glanced from eye to eye. We wonder why; for what can be more orthodox, than that a gentleman should not allow ladies to ransack bogs for flowers without assistance? Why should a young man blush or stammer when his politeness is remarked on? O consciousness! what tricks dost thou play us!

The party was large; but Farmer Maine's fine old hall was by no means put out of countenance: it had space for them all; and at the table where the harvest-home and sheep-shearing feasts were wont to be held, the whole party, little and big, with the exception of the two youngest, who were scarcely old enough to 'behave themselves before folk,' were soon arranged. Mrs Maine had added some of her finest ducks and chickens, and a grand piece of bacon, to the otherwise cold feast—a move exceedingly approved of by the boys, for 'ducks and green pease' are well known to be the treat, *par excellence*, of young creatures of the school-boy genus. The trout were superlative, and the whort-pies only beaten by the whort-puddings, inasmuch as the former ought to have been cold, and were, of necessity under the circumstances, hot; whereas the latter were as they ought to be—smoking hot, and swimming in the dark, rich sirup of the juicy fruit. Great bowls of cream flanked these dainty dishes; and truly an alderman of the olden time might have felt himself well off at that ample feast. The party were as merry as the viands were good. Hugh was himself again: he had apparently solved the problem which had occupied his mind in the morning; he now neither blushed nor stammered, but stood the fire of all the saucy young creatures; and turning out Phil, who had established himself by the side of his favourite Jacie, coolly possessed himself of the place, and gave himself up to enjoyment; no repulse being looked or spoken by the young lady, who, however, seemed to have herself appropriated the blushing and stammering propensities which had been abandoned by her neighbour. We ourselves suspected, that being unable to solve the problem himself, Hugh had asked Jacie to resolve it for him when they were chatting alone under the weeping-ash whilst the dinner was serving, and that she was abashed at its having been thought possible that she understood that branch of mathematics. But of this we cannot speak with certainty. It is quite clear that, after dinner, when Jacie was particularly wanted, she was nowhere to be found; and Rachel was obliged to take her place, and enact Titania to Robert's Bottom the Weaver, in her stead. All the young ones who had heard Mrs Scott read in the morning, had determined 'this green plot shall be our stage, and this hawthorn brake our tiring-house, and we will do it in action.' Bob, therefore, with a brown felt-hat drawn over his brows, and two tufts of bulrush-tops stuck in it, to represent asses' ears, lay lounging on a bank with his pretty little sisters hovering over him, and promising—

I'll give the fairies to attend on thee;  
And they shall fetch thee jewels from the deep,  
And sing while thou on pressed flowers dost sleep.

Then the four little ones, all decked with flowers, were made to act fairies, and directed to

Hop in his walks, and gambol in his eyes;  
Feed him with apricocks and dewberries,  
With purple grapes, green figs, and mulberries;

and bravely did the extempore performance go off,

till 'baby-boy,' not quite comprehending the menial nature of the character he was enacting as Pea-blossom, pushed off the fictitious ass's head, and began so vigorously to pull poor Bob's hair, as to make Titania's 'gentle joy' quite outrageous; on which a grand romping ensued, and the scene ended with shouts of laughter. Many merry games followed among the younger ones, and again the elders revelled in groups among the trees, each party disporting themselves as best suited the freak of the moment. Another visit to the whort-grounds was projected, and performed, and quarts of berries gathered and stowed away in the wagon for home-consumption—wood-strawberries, too, were to be gathered for tea. Some of the party enjoyed a visit to the cool large dairy, where stood the broad shining brass vessels full of scalded milk, coated with the rich clotted cream of the county, and of great bowls of the same rich commodity already skimmed off, and set by for use; and others amused themselves in learning to milk—an art in which Salome Cleveland and Alicia Damon made such progress, that they boasted of having drawn all the milk that was used for tea; whilst Annie, who for once found herself irretrievably separated from her inseparable, amused herself, in conjunction with Miss Colville, by making the junket, and skimming the cream for the whole party. Still Jacinth and Mr Hugh Scott were invisible, nor was it till quite tea-time that they reappeared to give account of themselves.

We would fain tell our readers what plants they had found in their excursion, which was no doubt of botanical tendency; but a bit of forget-me-not, in Jacie's hand, on which she seemed to set great store, was all we saw. We should like also to enlarge much more on the many pleasant enjoyments which filled up the rest of this long day in the country; but our space will not allow us to say more, than that the same plan was adopted for the children's tea as for their breakfast, and they, with full supplies of cake, bread, and butter, and new milk, were despatched in the wagon at an early hour, and were all so sound asleep by the time they reached home, as to be obliged to be lifted out, and put straight to bed. The elders, after enjoying a happy 'Three-make' under the trees behind the farm, set forward just as the deepening shadows of the woods and the brightening rays of the moon began to warn them that the night was coming on; all agreeing, that of all possible ways of enjoying a holiday, there was none to be compared to that of spending it amidst the beautiful valleys and combs of the Quantock Hills in the whorting-season.

#### SULPHUR.

This mineral product is the key which opens the door to chemical manufactures. From it we make sulphuric acid (oil of vitriol), and without sulphuric acid many of the largest factories would cease to exist. By its aid we are enabled to produce so many substances, that the bare mention of them would fill the whole paper. Bleaching, dyeing, soda-making, metal-refining, electro-plating, electric-telegraphing, &c., are primarily indebted to this acid. Many of the most valued medicines could not be made without it—such as ether, calomel, &c. Sulphur being the chief ingredient of gunpowder, modern warfare could not go on comfortably without it. A people that does not possess lucifer-matches, stands beyond the pale of civilisation; yet matches cannot be made without sulphur—not because matches are dipped into melted brimstone before they are 'tipped' with the phosphoric composition which ignites them, but because this very material could not be made without the indirect use of sulphur. In England, we consume 60,000 tons of sulphur annually, which is imported to this country from the volcanic regions of Sicily. For political reasons, the king of Naples has recently prohibited the export of sulphur to any of the kingdoms now at war. Reckoning the value of sulphur at L.5 per ton, implies a loss of L.300,000—

a pretty liberal 'peace-offering' from the King of the Two Sicilies! This loss of sulphur will be very severely felt for a short time in England; but eventually it will be of great service, as we have as much brimstone in this country as commerce requires—a fact that will soon be made manifest by the demand for it; and when once it is seen that our own resources are sufficient, the king of Naples must never expect us to go to his shop any more. It was thus during the last wars that we prevented the French people from eating Jamaica sugar; so they set to and made sugar from beet-root, and we have lost so much trade ever since.—*Septimus Piesse.*

#### A LUXURIOUS AUTHOR.

In this broiling month (July) I use every method in my power to guard against the heat: four servants constantly fan my apartments—they raise wind enough to make a tempestuous sea. My wine is plunged in snow and ice till the moment I drink it; I pass half my time in the cold bath, and divide the other half between an orange-grove, cooled by a refreshing fountain, and my sofa; I do not venture to cross the street but in a coach. Other people are content with smelling flowers, I have hit on the method of eating and drinking them: I protest that my chamber smells stronger of perfume than Arabia-Felix; and I am so lavish of rose-water and essence of jessamine, that I actually swim in it. While my neighbours, at this sultry season, are overloading their stomachs with solid food, I subsist almost entirely on birds fed with sugar; these, with jellies and fruit, are the whole of my diet. . . . My house is neither so elegant nor so costly as Fontainebleau, but it has a charming wood behind it, which the solar ray cannot penetrate, and is admirably calculated for an invalid with weak eyes, or to make an ordinary woman appear tolerably handsome. The trees, covered with foliage to their very roots, are crowded with turtle-doves and pheasants: wherever I walk, I tread on tulips and anemones, which I have ordered my gardener to plant among the other flowers, to prove that the French strangers do not suffer by a comparison with their Italian friends.—*Balzac.*

#### THE OLD COUNTRY.

And now we are fairly alongside the shore, and we are soon going to set our foot on the land of Old England. Say what we will, an American, particularly a New Englander, can never approach the Old Country without a kind of thrill and pulsation of kindred. Its history for two centuries was our history. Its literature, laws, and language, are our literature, laws, and language. Spenser, Shakspeare, Bacon, Milton, were a glorious inheritance, which we share in common. Our very life-blood is English life-blood. It is Anglo-Saxon vigour that is spreading our country from Atlantic to Pacific, and leading on to a new era in the world's development. America is a tall, slightly young shoot, that has grown from the old royal oak of England: divided from its parent root, it has shot up in new, rich soil, and under genial brilliant skies, and therefore takes on a new type of growth and foliage, but the sap in it is the same.—*Mrs Stowe's Sunny Memories of Foreign Lands.*

#### NEW WEATHER-GLASS.

For some years I have been in the habit of watching the condition of the gum in my wife's camphor-bottle, which stands in our bedroom; and when not disturbed, it makes a capital weather-glass. It answers my purpose as well as a barometer that would cost me twenty-five or fifty dollars. When there is to be a change of weather from fair to windy or wet, the thin flakes of the gum will rise up; and sometimes, when there was to be a great storm, I have seen them at the top. When they settle down clearly at the bottom, then we are sure of grand weather. Any farmer who will watch his wife's camphor-bottle for a season, will never have occasion to watch the birds, or locusts, or ants, for indications of a change in the weather.—*Newspaper Paragraph.*

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